(e) Apart from implementing the declarations under the Citizens' Charter in letter and spirit, the Government also proposes to make law and procedure simpler, to undertake invasive actions like search and survey in very rare cases, to create large Taxpayer Units (LTUs) for facilitating high taxpayers and to create help Centers in cooperation with industry associations, professional bodies and NGOs for facilitating small taxpayers.

Uniform sharing of tax burden

3461. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the protest against higher personal tax rates, particularly from the salaried class;

(b) whether it is a fact that non-salaried people with comparable or even higher living standard end up paying just nominal tax, which is much less compared to the tax paid by the salaried class; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to ensure that the people from service/business/profession are made to share tax burden uniformly?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The Finance Bill 2005 proposes a number of changes in the personal income tax structure. The slab rates have been comprehensively revised and almost all categories of taxpayers stand to gain. It is not true to say, therefore, that personal tax rates are higher than before.

(b) and (c) Representations have been received from a cross section of people on certain perceived anomalies in the structure. These are being examined and Government's response will be conveyed to Parliament during the debate on the Finance Bill.

Circulation of fake currency notes

†3462. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some foreign anti-social elements are spreading their network by introducing fake Indian currency of different denominations in the markets across the country specially in the State of Bihar and in the North-Eastern border areas thereby creating a possible danger of a parallel economy in the country; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof and the effective steps taken so far by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) As per information received from the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) on recoveries/seizures made by banks and law enforcing agencies, circulation of fake currency notes have been noticed in all parts of the country including Bihar and North Eastern region. Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) are injected into circulation by local counterfeiters as well as by external agencies who smuggle fake currency notes into India through various routes. However, the quantity of FICN is miniscule as compared to the total volume of Indian bank notes in circulation. Hence the question of creating the possible danger of a parallel economy in the country does not arise.

(b) Government has taken a number of steps to stop infiltration and circulation of fake currency notes which include stepping up of a vigilance by Border Security Force/Custom Authorities, setting up of a special units in the Central Bureau of Investigation exclusively for counterfeit currency notes, incorporation of special security features in high denomination notes, extensive campaign by RBI through electronic and print media to publicise the feature of the genuine currency notes, regular imparting of training to Government Officers on identification of fake notes, provision of suitable equipments in banks for detecting of counterfeit notes.

Merger and Consolidation of Banks

3463. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to initiate merger and consolidation of the Public Sector Banks;

(b) the details of different aspects of merger of Public Sector banks in relation to the public interests; and

(c) how Government propose to safeguard the present pattern of netwroks of banks spreading upto the village level and the flow of credit to the rural people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) No, Sir. Government and Reserve